

The art therapy studio is a safe place where the child can decide on the art materials to use, the concept to create and the subject matter to talk about. Art can be used as a positive, healthy outlet for thoughts and feelings which can be difficult to put into words.

About Us

We are the Canadian voice of art therapy. We bring together art therapists to raise standards and advance art therapy practices.

Health Benefits of Art Therapy

Art therapy engages all the senses to relax the nervous system. Art making causes a shift from sympathetic to parasympathetic nervous system, which results in improved self-regulation, anxiety reduction, feeling more in control ¹, improved executive functioning ², and acceptance and integration within the whole self ^{3,4}.

¹Hass-Cohen, N. & Carr, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Art therapy and clinical neuroscience*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

²Del Giocco, M. (2000). *Art therapy: A missing link in cognitive rehabilitation for the neurologically impaired*. Del Giocco Art Therapy Institute.

³Collie, K & Kante, A. (2011). Art groups for marginalized women with breast cancer. *Qualitative Health Research*, 21(5), 652-661.

⁴Malchiodi, C. A. (Ed.) (2012). *Art therapy and health care*. Gilford Press.

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CANADIAN ART THERAPY ASSOCIATION

The Voice of Art Therapy

Art Therapy for Children



Artwork: *Divine Double* by Mia Tremblay

What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy combines the creative process and psychotherapy, facilitating self-exploration and understanding. Using imagery, colour and shape as part of this creative therapeutic process, thoughts and feelings can be expressed that would otherwise be difficult to articulate.

Children do not need prior art experience in order to take part in this therapy. The art therapy studio is a safe place where the child can decide on the art materials to use, the concept to create and the subject matter to talk about. Independence, self-regulation and confidentiality are emphasized.

Canadian Art Therapy Association. (2017). *What is art therapy*. <http://www.canadianarttherapy.org/what-is-art-therapy/>

Art Therapy Can Help With:

- Behavioural issues
- Depression
- ADD/ADHD
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Learning disabilities
- Physical/developmental disabilities
- Anger management
- Grief and loss
- Anxiety and stress
- Interpersonal issues such as bullying, and social isolation
- Experiences of trauma/abuse
- Attachment difficulties/disorders
- Oppositional/defiant behaviour
- Dealing with sibling or family dynamics
- Identity exploration

How Can Art Therapy Benefit Children?

- Psychosocial support
- Assist in coping with physical health conditions such as cancer
- Decrease loneliness and social isolation
- Increase relaxation
- Reduce anxiety and agitation
- Build interpersonal skills, and increase meaningful and positive interaction with family and friends
- Increase self awareness and self discovery
- Build positive coping skills
- Promote freedom of choice, sense of achievement, and sense of mastery, thus increasing self-esteem

American Art Therapy Association. (2015). AATA Research Committee Art Therapy Outcome Bibliography. <https://arttherapy.org/upload/outcomebibliographyresearchcmte.pdf>

Professional Standards for Art Therapists

Art therapists are trained professionals with expertise in counseling psychology and fine arts. In Canada and the United States, art therapists must have at minimum a master's degree or a master's level diploma in art therapy before identifying themselves within the profession. This graduate level education includes supervised clinical practicum hours (700 hours for Canadian art therapists), thus ensuring the safety of the client as well as professional liability for agencies and employers offering this form of therapy.

If you are interested in education in art therapy, or looking for an art therapist in your area, please visit the CATA website at canadianarttherapy.org.

CATA hosts an annual conference that brings together art therapists and other professionals to promote and advance the profession of art therapy. For more information, please visit: canadianarttherapy.org/upcoming-conference/



Photo by Oona McClure